

Immigration Enforcement Has Fallen Significantly Under President Bush

*The Hypocrisy of Republicans on Immigration Is
Highlighted by the Republican Record*



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IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT HAS FALLEN SIGNIFICANTLY UNDER PRESIDENT BUSH

House Republicans have chosen to focus on illegal immigration as a key issue this fall. And yet it is odd that they would choose a topic on which they fail to have a single accomplishment. Indeed, this report will show that, while the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress talk tough about cracking down on illegal immigration, they have failed to enforce our immigration laws. On measure after measure, the rate of immigration enforcement has fallen significantly under the Bush Administration compared to the Clinton Administration.

A number of analyses of the Bush record have come to this same conclusion. For example, the Washington Times (5/25/06) concluded in an article headlined, "Arrest of Illegals Falls Off Clinton Pace:" *"The U.S. Border Patrol ... apprehended more illegal aliens under President Clinton than under President Bush. ... Mr. Bush trails his predecessor on a series of measures of border security."* Similarly, the Washington Post (6/19/06) concluded in an article headlined, "Illegal Hiring is Rarely Penalized:" *"Between 1999 and 2003, worksite enforcement operations were scaled back 95 percent by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which subsequently was merged into the Homeland Security Department."*

The fact that, under the Bush Administration, immigration enforcement has fallen is not the fault of the hard-working Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and Border Patrol agents. Rather, it is the result of the neglect and underfunding of immigration enforcement and border security under the Bush Administration.

Given the record of President Bush on immigration enforcement, it is not surprising that a recent national poll conducted by Benenson Strategy Group found that more than two out of three Americans feel that President Bush has done a poor job enforcing the immigration laws on the books. Indeed, Americans know that, under President Bush, our immigration system is broken. Americans want strong border security, tough enforcement of our immigration laws, and comprehensive immigration reform that fixes our broken system.

In addition to this report, the Office of Democratic Leader also recently issued a report on the Republican record of voting repeatedly against strengthening border security. That report pointed out that, seven times over the last four and a half years, Democrats have offered amendments to enhance border security resources. If these Democratic amendments had been adopted, there would be 6,600 more Border Patrol agents, 14,000 more detention beds, and 2,700 more immigration enforcement agents along our borders than now exist. And yet, each time, these efforts have been rejected by the Republican Majority.

These two reports taken together - one on immigration enforcement and one on border security - highlight the hypocrisy of Republicans now claiming that their number-one priority is effective immigration enforcement and border security. The question remains: *Where have Republicans been for the past five and a half years?*

Following is an overview of how immigration enforcement has declined under President Bush.

Under President Bush, the number of apprehensions at the border has declined by 31 percent. Despite all of his rhetoric about border security, President Bush's record on border security is abysmal. The number of apprehensions of undocumented individuals at or near the Mexican border has declined by 31 percent under President Bush - from an average of 1.52 million apprehensions per year between fiscal years 1996 and 2000, compared to an average of 1.05 million apprehensions between fiscal years 2001 and 2004. [Third Way, 5/06]

Under President Bush, the number of apprehensions within the interior of the country has plummeted by 36 percent. Similarly, despite all of his rhetoric about immigration enforcement, President's record is abysmal. The number of apprehensions of undocumented individuals within the interior of the country has plummeted by 36 percent under President Bush - from an average of 40,193 between fiscal years 1996 and 2000, compared to an average of 25,901 between fiscal years 2001 and 2004. Indeed, apprehensions within the interior of the country reached an all-time low of 21,113 in FY 2004. [Third Way, 5/06]

Under President Bush, immigration enforcement against employers has fallen dramatically - with resources moved out of worksite immigration enforcement. Since George W. Bush became President, the resources being devoted to enforcing immigration laws against America's employers have dropped significantly. For example, in FY 1999, the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had 240 agents working on worksite immigration enforcement. By contrast, in FY 2003, the current Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had only 90 agents working on worksite immigration enforcement. [GAO, 8/05]

Under President Bush, audits of employers have dropped significantly. Overall worksite immigration enforcement efforts have dropped significantly. Audits of employers suspected of utilizing undocumented labor have dropped from a peak of almost 8,000 under President Clinton to less than 2,200 in FY 2003, under President Bush. [Third Way, 5/06]

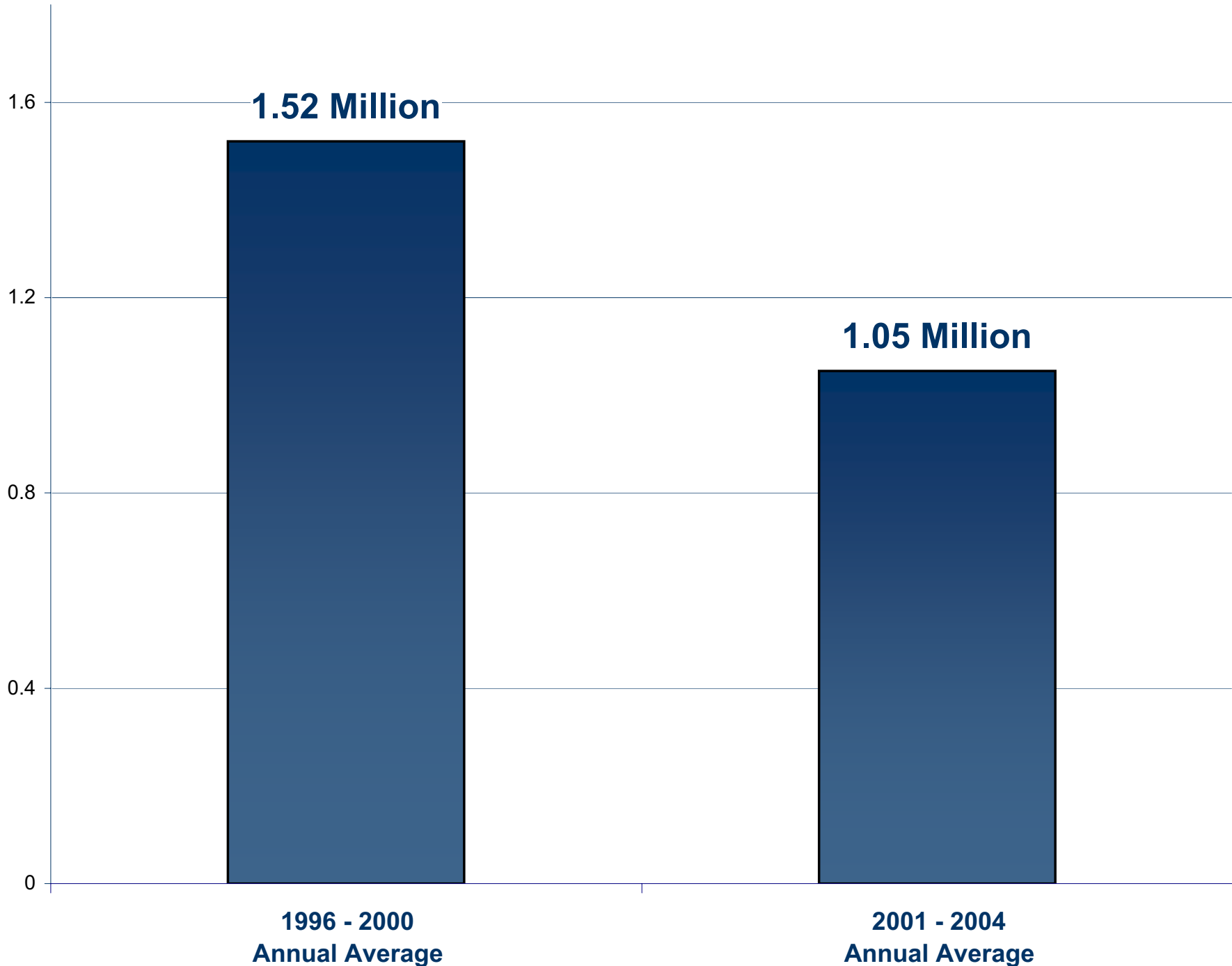
Similarly, under President Bush, fines initiated against employers have plummeted. Enforcing immigration laws against employers is now a low priority. In FY 1999, under President Clinton, the United States initiated fines against 417 employers. And yet, in FY 2004, under President Bush, the United States initiated fines against only three employers - a drop of 99 percent. [GAO, 8/05]

Under President Bush, immigration arrests at worksites have also declined drastically. Every aspect of worksite enforcement has dropped significantly. In addition to fines against employers dropping off dramatically, arrests of unauthorized workers have also fallen. In FY 1999, under President Clinton, there were 2,849 unauthorized workers arrested during worksite immigration enforcement operations. And yet, in FY 2004, under President Bush, there were only 445 unauthorized workers arrested - a drop of 84 percent. [GAO, 8/05]

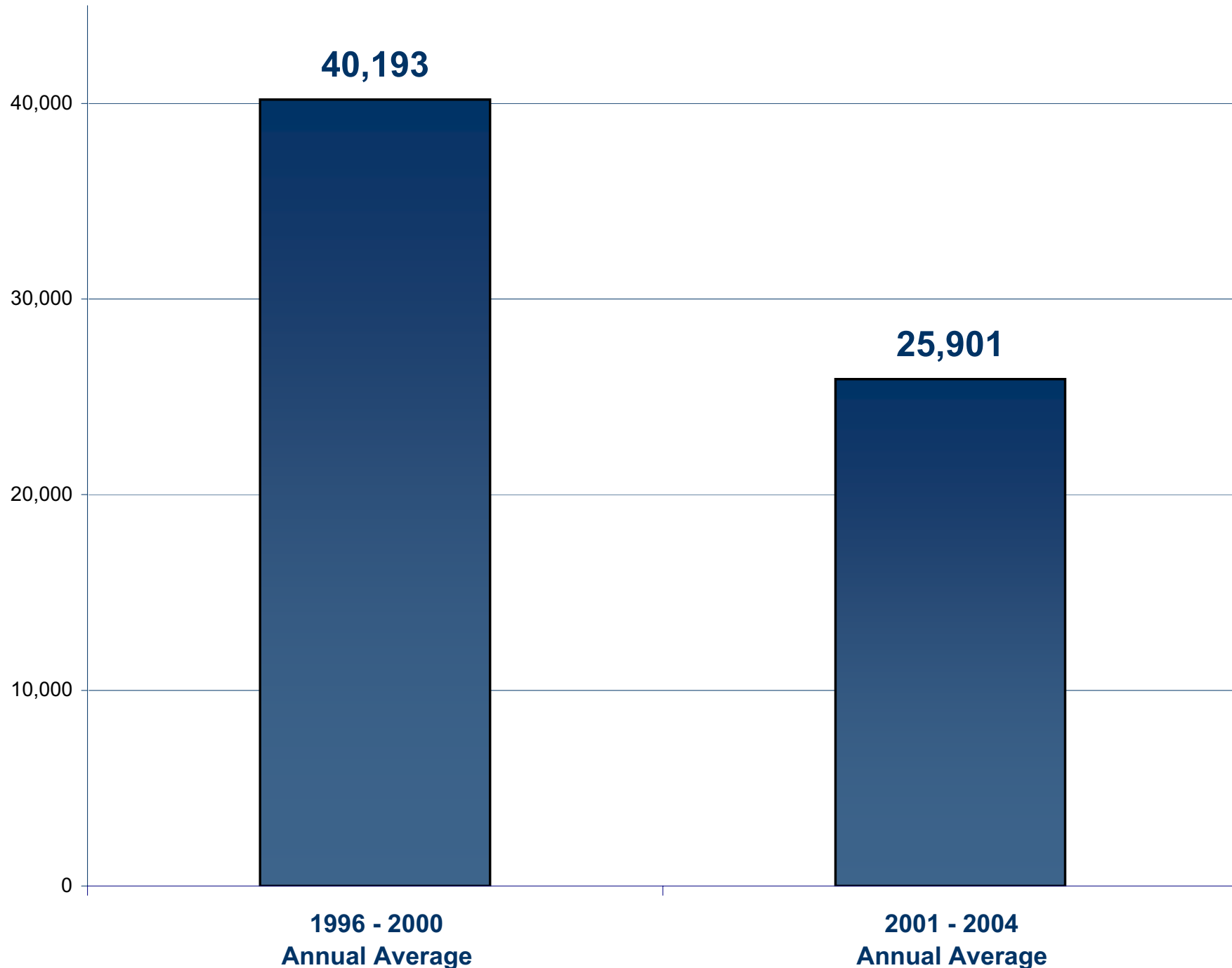
Under President Bush, immigration fraud investigations have also fallen. In order to enforce our immigration laws, investigating immigration fraud is crucially important. Immigration fraud includes such document fraud as the counterfeiting and sale of identity documents. And yet, despite the acknowledgement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that immigration fraud is "a problem of epidemic proportions," investigating immigration fraud has fallen dramatically under President Bush. In FY 1995, under President Clinton, there were 6,455 immigration fraud investigations that were completed. In FY 2003, under President Bush, there were only 1,389 immigration fraud investigations completed - a drop of 78 percent. [Congressional Research Service, 4/06]

Finally, under President Bush, the conviction rate for criminal immigration investigations has been abysmally low - 6 percent. Under the Bush Administration, in FY 2004, only 4,007 out of nearly 59,000 criminal immigration investigations the ICE initiated of human smuggling, trafficking, illegal employment, identify fraud, and criminal alien investigations resulted in convictions. [Third Way, 5/06]

Number of Apprehensions At the Border Has Declined by 31% Under President Bush

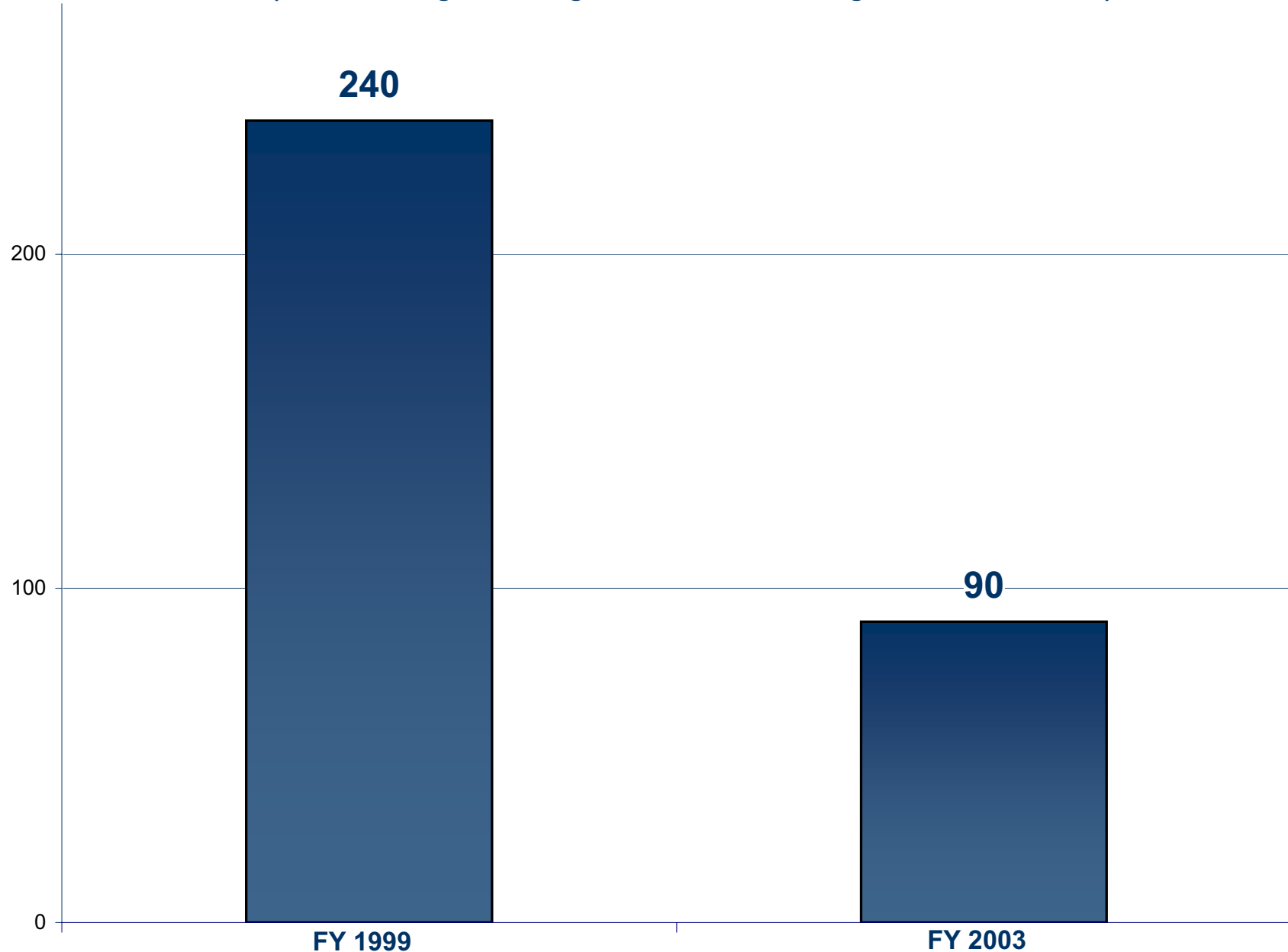


Number of Apprehensions Inside the Country Has Declined by 36% Under President Bush

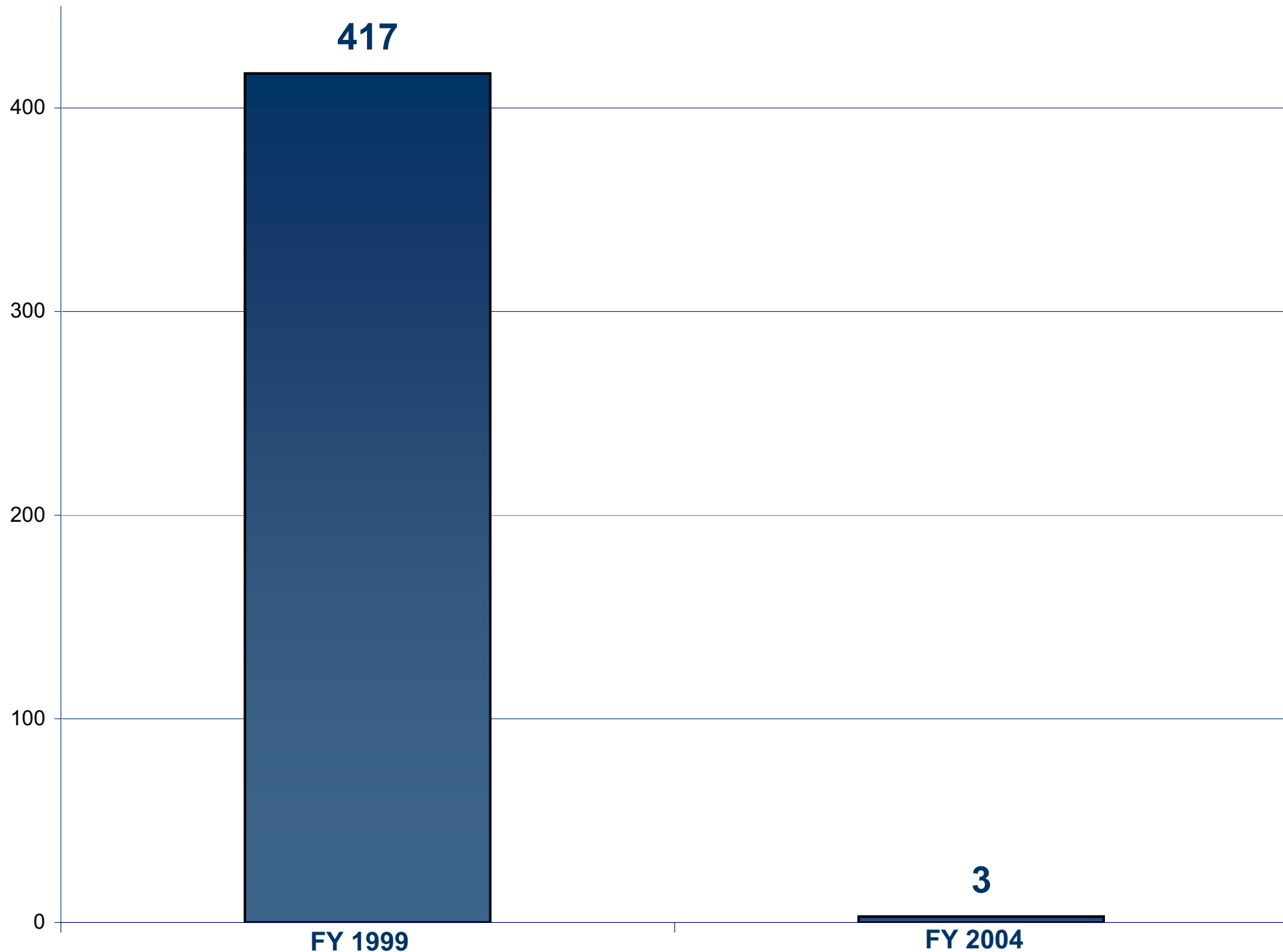


Bush Administration Has Cut Personnel For Worksite Immigration Enforcement by 63%

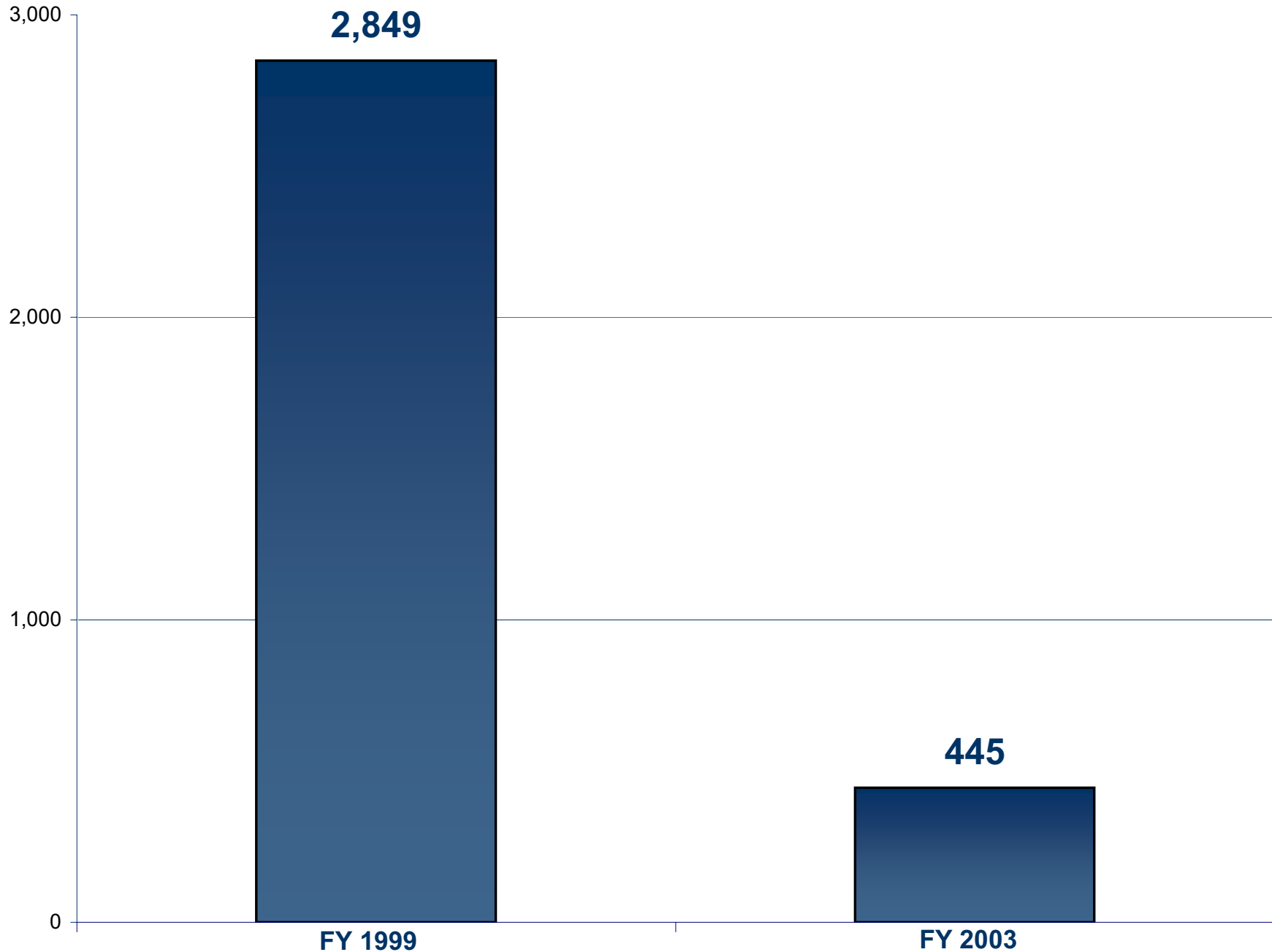
(Number of Agents Assigned to Worksite Immigration Enforcement)



Number of Worksite Immigration Enforcement Fines Against Employers Has Fallen Drastically Under Bush



Number of Worksite Immigration Enforcement Arrests Has Fallen Drastically Under Bush



Number of Immigration Fraud Cases Completed Has Fallen Drastically Under Bush

